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SUBJECT: BERLUSCONI-BLAIR ROME MEETING: SADDAM MUST DISARM,
HOPEFULLY PEACEFULLY

**¶1. (U) SUMMARY: THE BERLUSCONI-BLAIR MEETING IN ROME FEB. 21
TOUCHED ON "THE EUROPE OF THE FUTURE," DEFENSE AND SECURITY,
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BUT FOCUSED ON THE CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: MOSTLY IRAQ BUT
ALSO THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT. BOTH PRIME MINISTERS
AGREED ON THE NEED TO UPHOLD UNSC RESOLUTION 1441 AND DISARM
SADDAM, HOPEFULLY PEACEFULLY. END SUMMARY.

**¶2. (SBU) IN A BRIEF READ-OUT FROM PAOLO DIONISI, PM
BERLUSCONI'S DEPUTY DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, DIONISI CONFIRMED
THE ACCURACY OF MEDIA REPORTS AND THE FACT THAT THE TWO PRIME
MINISTERS FOCUSED MOSTLY ON IRAQ IN THEIR FEB. 21 MEETING IN
ROME. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH
BLAIR, BERLUSCONI SAID:**

-- "THE OBJECTIVE IS TO HAVE SADDAM HUSSEIN DISARM IN
PEACE... (BUT) A POSSIBLE ATTACK WOULD NOT BE AGAINST A
COUNTRY, A PEOPLE, IT WOULD BE AGAINST A DICTATOR, A REGIME
THAT ...USES PRISONS, TERROR, AND DEATH FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE."

-- "STRONG DIPLOMATIC-MILITARY PRESSURE ON IRAQ CAN LEAD TO
PEACE. THE U.S. IS NOT SAYING 'WE ATTACK TOMORROW,' IT IS
SAYING: 'IF YOU WANT PEACE, PREPARE FOR WAR, AND THIS IS WHAT
BUSH SAID, AND THIS IS WHAT BLAIR AND I SAID TODAY, AND EVEN
THE EU COUNCIL."

-- "NO WESTERN DEMOCRACY THINKS DIFFERENTLY THAN WHAT IS
WRITTEN IN RESOLUTION 1441 AND IN THE JOINT EU DOCUMENT. ALL
WESTERN DEMOCRACIES BELIEVE IRAQ'S DISARMAMENT TO BE
NECESSARY AND ALL HOPE THAT IT CAN OCCUR IN PEACE."

¶3. (U) AT THE SAME PRESS CONFERENCE, BLAIR SAID:

-- "WE HOPE THAT THE IRAQI ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY,
BUT WE ARE DETERMINED TO OBTAIN COMPLIANCE OF RESOLUTION 1441
IN EVERY WAY."

-- "SADDAM DISARMS ONLY IF HE GETS THE INTERNATIONAL
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COMMUNITY'S MESSAGE, WHICH IS THIS: DISARM PEACEFULLY OR IT
WILL BE US WHO WILL DISARM YOU."
-- "WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR SADDAM TO DISARM, WE COULD HAVE
ATTACKED LAST SUMMER, BUT U.S. PRESIDENT BUSH DECIDED TO
WAIT. I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THOSE WHO DON'T WANT WAR. THAT'S
WHY WE GAVE SADDAM EVERY POSSIBILITY TO DISARM."
-- "IS THERE SOMEONE WHO REALLY BELIEVES SADDAM IS
COOPERATING? WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AN UPCOMING CONFLICT, US
WHO DID EVERYTHING TO AVOID IT, OR HIM?"

**¶4. (U) PALAZZO CHIGI, THE PM'S OFFICE, ISSUED THE FOLLOWING
COMMUNIQU FOLLOWING THE MEETING.**

"BASED ON THE RECENT POSITIVE CONCLUSIONS OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON IRAQ, THE TWO PRIME
MINISTERS REITERATED THEIR COMMON POSITION ON IRAQ. THEY
DISCUSSED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UN AND NEXT STEPS,
PARTICULARLY ON A SECOND RESOLUTION.
ON ISRAEL/PALESTINE, THE PRIME MINISTERS AGREED ON THE URGENT
NEED FOR PUBLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUARTET
ROADMAP; FOR STEPS TO END THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE; AND FOR A
FREEZE ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENT BUILDING, TO PRESERVE THE
PHYSICAL BASIS FOR A TWO-STATE SOLUTION."

**¶5. (U) BLAIR ALSO MET FEB. 21 WITH TWO LEADERS OF THE ITALIAN
OPPOSITION: FRANCESCO RUTELLI, CENTER-LEFT OLIVE TREE LEADER
AND PRESIDENT OF THE DAISY MOVEMENT, AND MASSIMO D'ALEMA,
PRESIDENT OF THE DEMOCRATS OF THE LEFT. RUTELLI STRESSED
THAT THE "TRIUMPH OF THE UN WOULD BE A POLITICAL VICTORY FOR
THE AMERICANS AND THE BRITISH, WHO HAVE SHOWN THEY WANT TO
USE THEIR ENERGIES TO PUSH FOR DISARMAMENT IN IRAQ." D'ALEMA
REITERATED THE NEED TO EXHAUST "EVERY EFFORT FOR A PEACEFUL
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SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS," AND PRAISED BLAIR'S COMMITMENT TO
SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION TO THE "TRAGEDY IN THE MIDDLE EAST."
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